

- 7 -

CLAIMS

1. A splice chamber for accommodating and protecting a splice and excess optical cable between a launch platform and an underwater vehicle, the chamber comprising:-
 - 5 two half portions joined longitudinally to define a storage chamber;
means for attaching the chamber to the launch platform;
means for attaching the chamber to the underwater vehicle; and
means for separating the two half portions of the chamber.
2. A chamber according to claim 1, wherein the storage chamber is shaped
10 to control the bend radius of optical cable stored therein.
3. A chamber according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the storage chamber also provides protection for the splice and optical cable both during storage and during the launch phase.
4. A chamber according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the storage
15 chamber is shaped to accommodate twists induced into the optical cable during launch of the underwater vehicle from the launch platform.
5. A chamber according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the means for separating the two half portions of the chamber comprises an active release device.
- 20 6. A chamber according to claim 5, wherein the active release device comprises a spring-loaded device.
7. A chamber according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the means for attaching the chamber to the launch platform comprises a hosepipe, the hosepipe being connected to the chamber by a swivel joint.
- 25 8. A chamber according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the means for attaching the chamber to the underwater vehicle includes a weak link.

- 8 -

9. A chamber according to claim 8, wherein the weak link comprises a load-sensitive device.

10. A chamber according to claim 9, wherein the load-sensitive device comprises a shear pin located in a retaining collar.

5 11. A chamber according to claim 10, wherein the shear pin ruptures to release the retaining collar and hence the two half portions of the chamber at an appropriate time.

10

15

20